

Alf,Bill,Clem,Dick,Ed and Fred were six brothers who were all very keen fisherman One fine morning they decided to go down to the river to see who could catch the most fish.Alf said he would fish from his boat,Bill from a raft,Clem from a bridge over the river,Dick from a tree overhanging the river,and Ed from a little island in the middle of the river.Fred said:'i shall walk along the bank of the river and fish.'

They fished all through that sunny morning, they all caught lots of fish and they were all pleased with themselves.

But Alf was worried about one thing, one rather important thing. As all the brothers had been fishing in different places, he wondered whether they were all safe and sound. Perhaps Clem has fallen off the bridge and got drowned, he thought. 'Or maybe Dick has slipped off that tree trunk. I had better count all of us brothers to see if we are all here', and he started to count 'There's Bill on the raft, that makes one. There's Clem on the bridge; that makes two. I can see Dick on the tree, that's three, there's Ed on the island, that's four. And Fred on the bank, that's five. But we are six. Good gracious me! One brother has been lost.' He was so upset he forgot to count himself.

Bill, on the raft, heard him. 'Have we really lost one?' he asked and he too began to count. 'There's Clem on the bridge. That makes one. Dick is on the tree. That's two. I spy Ed on the island. That's three. And there's Fred on the bank that's four. Oh yes, of course, that's Alf looking worried in the boat, that's five. Five! Where's the sixth? Oh dear, we've lost one.' Clem spotted him from the bridge. 'I'm going to have a re-count,' he said. 'There's Dick on that branch, that's one. Ed is quite visible on the island, that's two. Fred is on the bank, that's three. Alf is still there in his boat, that's four, and Bill is floating towards me on his raft, making five. Oh goodness me! Only five! We have indeed lost one.'

He was so upset that Dick counted them again just to make sure, but he too only found five. And Ed and Fred weren't luckier either when they checked. So they all left the spots from where they had been fishing and ran up and down the river bank trying to find the body of their unfortunate drowned brother. Just then a boy came strolling along the bank with his fishing-line and an empty basket. He too had been fishing but had not caught a single thing. 'Why do you all look all so worried?' he asked the brothers. 'You'all seem to have had a very good morning's fishing.' 'Because one of our brothers has been drowned,' they explained in great distress. 'There were six of us when we started out, and now there are only five.'

The boy made a quick count and saw there were six brothers. 'Look,' he said, 'i can help you find your lost brother. When i tickle each of you on the neck, i want you to count.' He went up to Alf and tickled him. 'One!' cried Alf, laughing. Then he went up to Bill and tickled his neck. 'Two!' cried Bill. And 'Three!' shouted Clem. And 'Four!' laughed Dick. And 'Five!' chuckled Ed. And 'Six!' shrieked Fred. And 'Six!' all the brothers roared in unison, realizing they were all safe and sound. They all embraced one another and shouted for joy. And in gratitude to the boy they gave the fish they had caught.

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